



FARMERS BRANCH Citizen Satisfaction Survey



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

January 23, 2015

Prepared by:
National Service Research



Table of Contents

	Page
Project Overview	3
Key Findings – City Service Priorities	6
Key Findings – Quality of Life	12
Key Findings – City Services	14
Key Findings – Public Safety	25
Key Findings - Fire and Medical Services	29
Key Findings – Trash and Recycling	32
Key Findings – City Communication Efforts	36
Benchmark Data	39
Demographics of Survey Respondents	43
Conclusions	46
National Service Research – Background/Contact Information	48

Project Overview

Study Objectives

National Service Research (NSR) completed a comprehensive research study for the City of Farmers Branch, Texas, a community of approximately 30,000 residents. The purpose of the citizen assessment study was to provide an indicator of the City's performance measures for various city departments and programs.

- ✓ Identify key measures of quality of life, public safety and service delivery
- ✓ Input from citizens will assist city officials in resource allocation, budget and policy decisions
- ✓ Identify where to maintain and improve city services

This study provides a measurement of how citizens feel about city service delivery and programs. The data should be considered along with other factors such as input from city officials and city staff when making budget and policy decisions.

NSR worked closely with the City of Farmers Branch staff throughout the research process. The survey design was based upon input from city staff.

The citizen survey and detailed survey tables are presented in the Appendix of the technical volume report.

Sampling Plan and Data Collection Overview

- ✓ The sampling plan included a mailed survey to 8,000 households (single and multi-family units) proportionately distributed throughout the city. Households had the option of completing the mailed survey or completing the survey online via the City website. The online survey was available in English and Spanish.
- ✓ Residents were informed about the survey through a multifaceted approach:
 - Press releases from the City (one introductory release prior to the survey mailing one mid-way through the campaign and one during the final week of data collection)
 - Announcement printed on water bill
 - Large advertisements displayed in City Facilities (City Hall, library, recreation center)
 - Mailed survey to 8,000 households
 - Branch Bulletin E-newsletter (on-going throughout the data collection period)
 - Cable News crawl - (on-going throughout the data collection period)
 - Social media – Facebook, Twitter ((on-going throughout the data collection period)
 - City website front page online survey link (on-going throughout the data collection period)
- ✓ Surveys were mailed on October 28, 2014, the survey cut-off date was November 28, 2014.
- ✓ A total of 600 responses were received via the mailed survey and 450 from the online survey. The margin of error of this sample size (1050) at a 95% confidence level is plus or minus 3.2%.
- ✓ Citizen surveys were conducted in 2008, 2010 and 2012. A total of 1500 surveys were completed via mail and online in 2012. A total of 500 completed telephone surveys were conducted in 2010 and 400 telephone surveys were completed in 2008. Comparisons are presented where applicable.
- ✓ The citizen survey and detailed survey tables are presented in the Appendix of the technical volume report.



KEY FINDINGS

City Service Priorities

Importance / Quality Rating of City Services

(All Respondents)

City Service	Q. How Important are these city services?		Q. Rate the Quality of these Farmers Branch city services		Importance Rank
	Very/Somewhat Important %*	Importance Mean Score	Excellent Good %	Quality Mean Score	
Providing public safety (police, fire, etc.)	98.8%	3.90	96.4	3.65	1
Maintaining streets and roads	97.9	3.76	69.9	2.84	2
Programs to revitalize the city's retail areas	92.6	3.51	55.9	2.57	3
Programs to revitalize the city's residential areas	91.6	3.50	55.8	2.57	4
Managing residential trash	97.7	3.75	84.6	3.26	5
Code enforcement services	88.3	3.41	63.8	2.72	6
Maintaining appearance of parks, landscapes and facilities	95.5	3.55	93.7	3.44	7
Senior citizen services	81.1	3.20	90.2	3.30	8
Library services	82.9	3.20	87.7	3.22	9

Importance Rank – The sum of the first, second and third most important rankings for each City service.

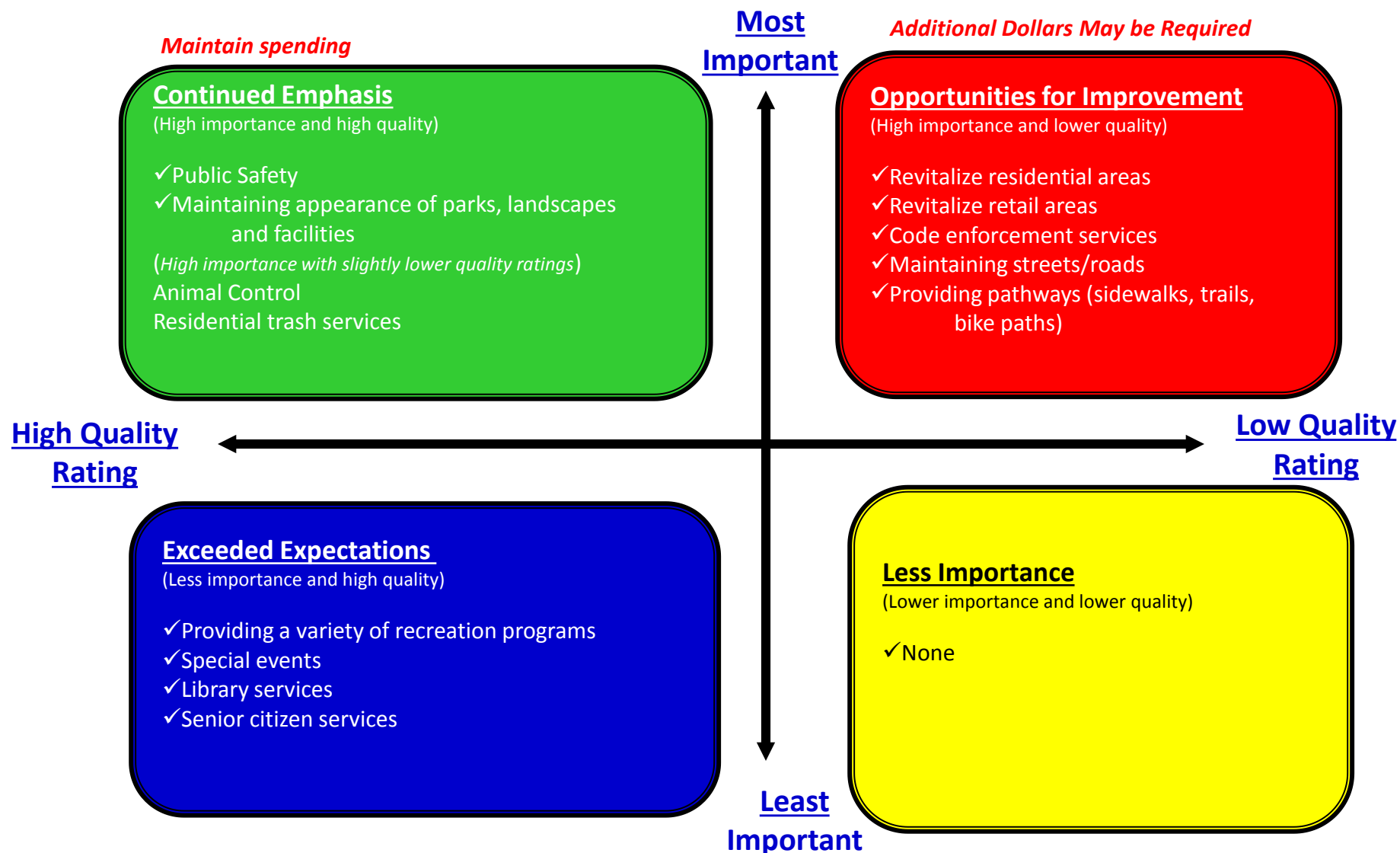
Mean Score = A weighted average calculated on a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being excellent or very important and 1 being poor or not at all important. Respondents who did not rate a city service were excluded from the mean score calculation. All percentages above exclude don't know answers.

Importance / Quality Rating of City Services

(All Respondents)

City Service	Q. How Important are these city services?		Q. Rate the Quality of these Farmers Branch city services		Importance Rank
	Very/Somewhat Important %	Importance Mean Score	Excellent Good %	Quality Mean Score	
Providing pathways – sidewalks, trails, bike paths	87.9	3.31	66.4	2.79	10
Animal control services	86.8	3.31	78.9	2.98	11
Special events (Liberty Fest, Blue Grass, Christmas, etc.)	71.6	2.92	87.9	3.27	12
Providing variety of recreational programs	74.6	2.97	84.9	3.12	13

Service Prioritization



Citizens may be willing to give up dollars for the services that are less important

Service Prioritization

- **Continued Emphasis** (High importance and high quality)
 - This area shows where the City is meeting customer expectations. Items in this area have a significant impact on the customer's overall level of satisfaction. The City should maintain (or slightly increase) emphasis on items in this area.
- **Opportunities for Improvement** (High importance, lower quality)
 - This area shows where the City is not performing as well as residents expect the City to perform. This area has an impact on customer satisfaction and the City should increase emphasis on items in this area.
- **Exceeded Expectations** (Less importance, high quality)
 - This area shows where the City is performing significantly better than customers expect the City to perform. Items in this area do not significantly affect overall satisfaction of residents. The City should maintain (or possibly reduce) emphasis on items in this area.
- **Less Important** (Lower importance, lower quality)
 - This area shows where the City is not performing well relative to the City's performance in other areas, however, this area is generally considered to be less important to residents. This area does not significantly affect overall satisfaction with City services because these items are less important to residents. The City should maintain current levels of emphasis in these areas.

Suggestions for Improving the Quality of Any City Service – 2014 - Update

36% of respondents provided a suggestion regarding improving the quality of city services, top mentions are listed below.

- Need curbside recycling/make it convenient
- Improve trash/recycling service (provide containers, more consistent service, etc.)
- Enhance code enforcement
- Revitalize business areas with better retail and quality sit-down restaurants
- Update/improve library
- Continue to repair and maintain streets and sidewalks
- Add more bike trails and trail connections



KEY FINDINGS

Quality of Life

Rating of Farmers Branch

Q. How Would You Rate:	2014 Excellent / Good %	2012 Excellent / Good %	2010 Excellent / Good %	2008 Excellent / Good %
Overall quality of life in Farmers Branch	94%	93%	95%	94%
Overall quality of services versus the taxes paid	86	85	92	93
Overall appearance of the City	86	84	93	87
Farmers Branch as a place to raise children	87	83	89	88
Farmers Branch as a place to work	84	83	91	87
Farmers Branch as a place to retire	86	82	92	90

A majority of respondents rated the overall quality of life in Farmers Branch as excellent or good. All ratings show slight increases from 2012.

Percentages EXCLUDE don't know/no answer responses

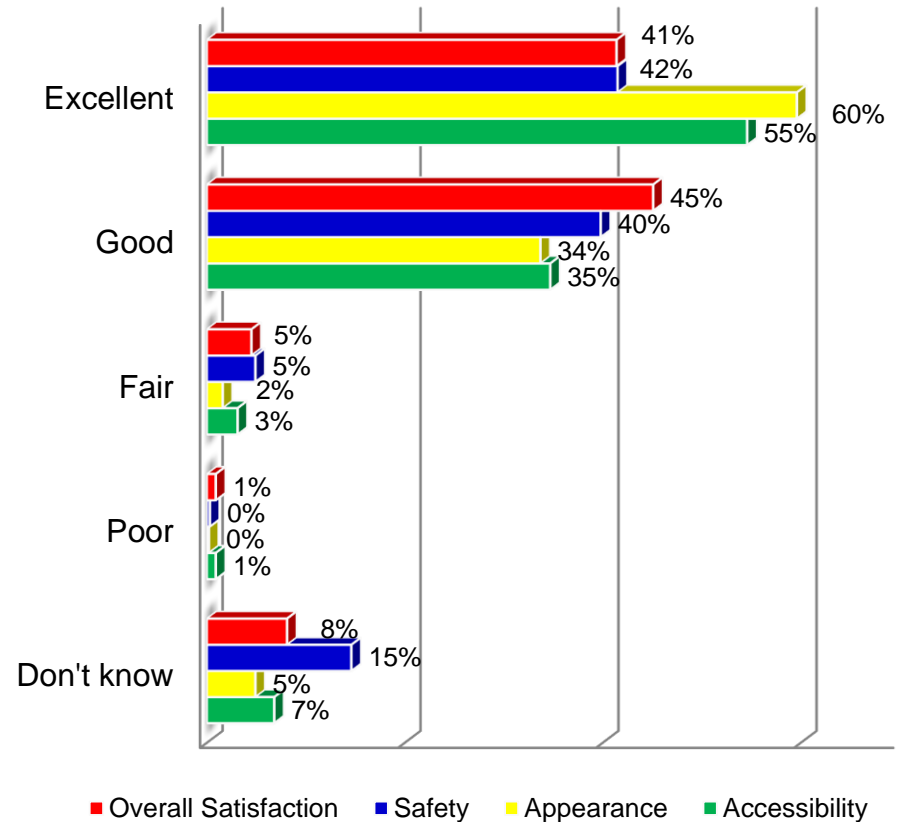


KEY FINDINGS

City Services

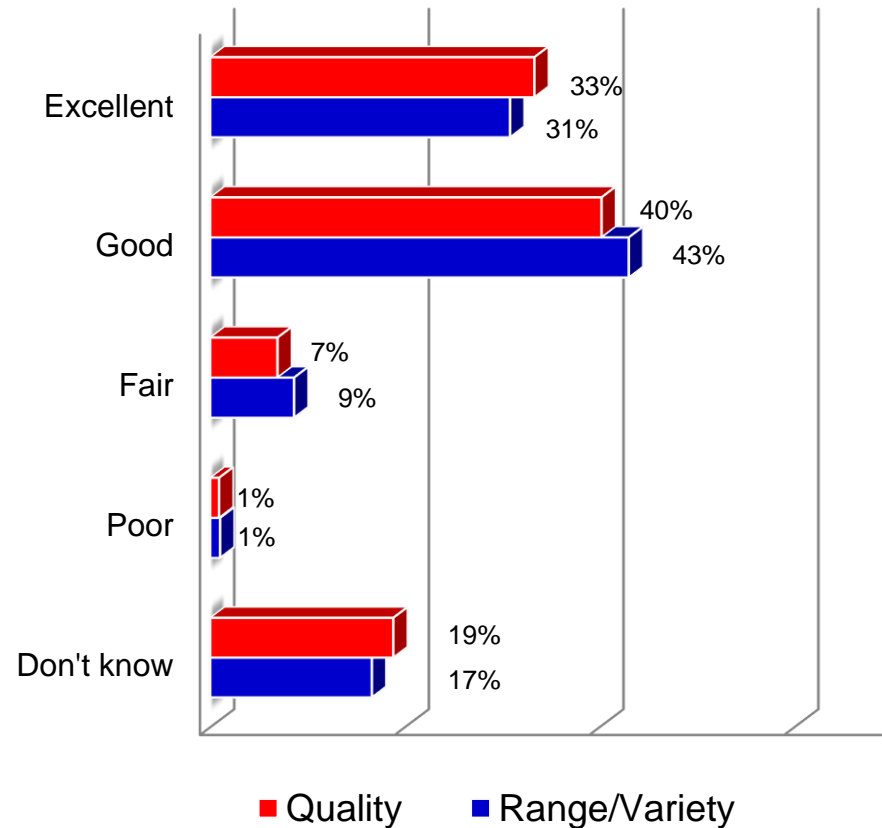
Parks and Recreation - 2014

- It is very clear that respondents are satisfied with the appearance, accessibility and safety of parks and recreation services in Farmers Branch. Very few respondents rated these characteristics fair or poor.
- Comments among the few who rated these characteristics as fair or poor included the following:
 - More trails/information about where trails are located/more trail connections with other neighboring cities
 - Better/more lighting in parks and parking lots
 - Need a dog park
 - Lack of parking in some parks
 - More programs and activities for adults
- Overall satisfaction scores for excellent/good in 2014 were 86% compared to 85% in 2012 and 92% in 2010.



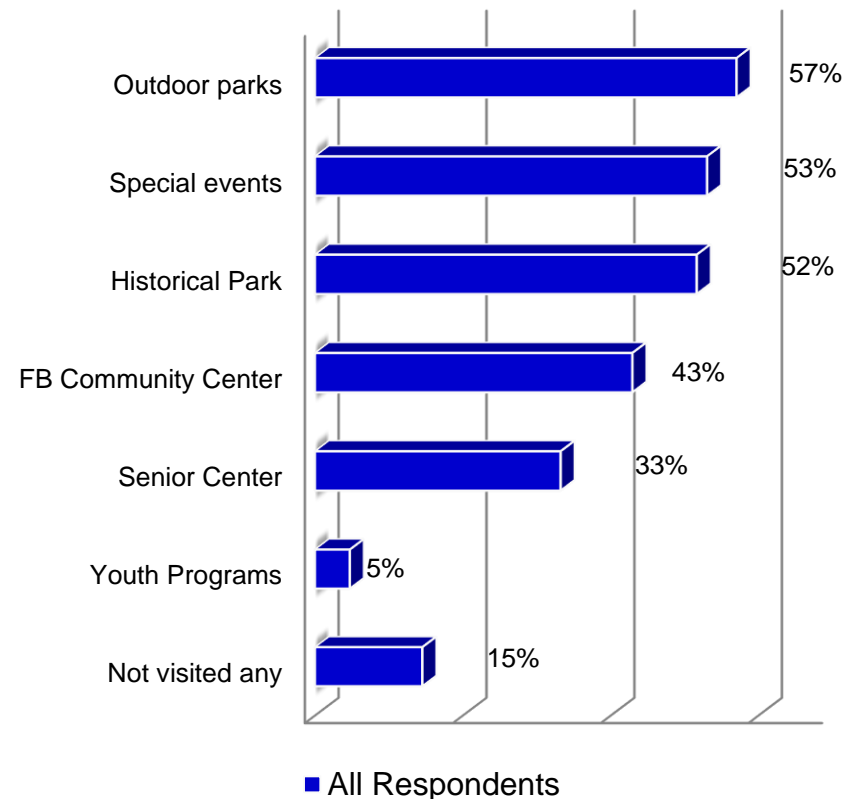
Parks and Recreation Programs - 2014

- About one in five respondents are not familiar with the park and recreation programs. However, a majority of those who are familiar with the City's programs rated them as excellent or good. Very few respondents rated programs fair or poor.
- Comments among the few who rated the programs as fair or poor included the following:
 - More programs/activities for adults
 - More evening programs for adults
 - More programs for teens
- 2014 "excellent" ratings are slightly higher than in 2012.
- 2012 scores: Range/variety; 29% excellent, 42% good. Quality; 30% excellent, 42% good.
- 2010 scores: Range/variety; 38% excellent, 38% good. Quality; 37% excellent and 39% good.



Park and Recreation Facilities or Programs Used within Past 12 Months - 2014

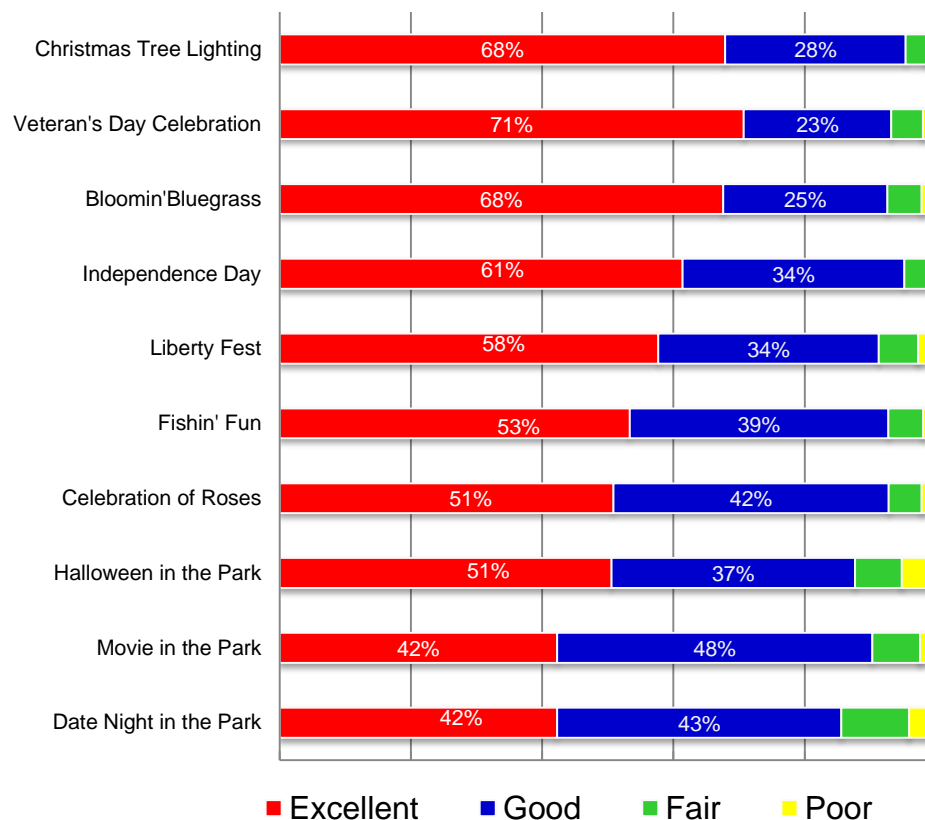
- More than half of all respondents surveyed have visited Farmers Branch outdoor parks and/or special events within the past year.
- 43% (46% in 2012 and 48% in 2010) of all respondents have visited the Farmers Branch Community Recreation Center, while 33% (34% in 2012 and 25% in 2010) have visited the Senior Center.
- Use of the Historical Park is up to 57% in 2014. This is an increase compared to past years. (43% in 2008 to 55% in 2010 and 48% in 2012).



Special Events - 2014

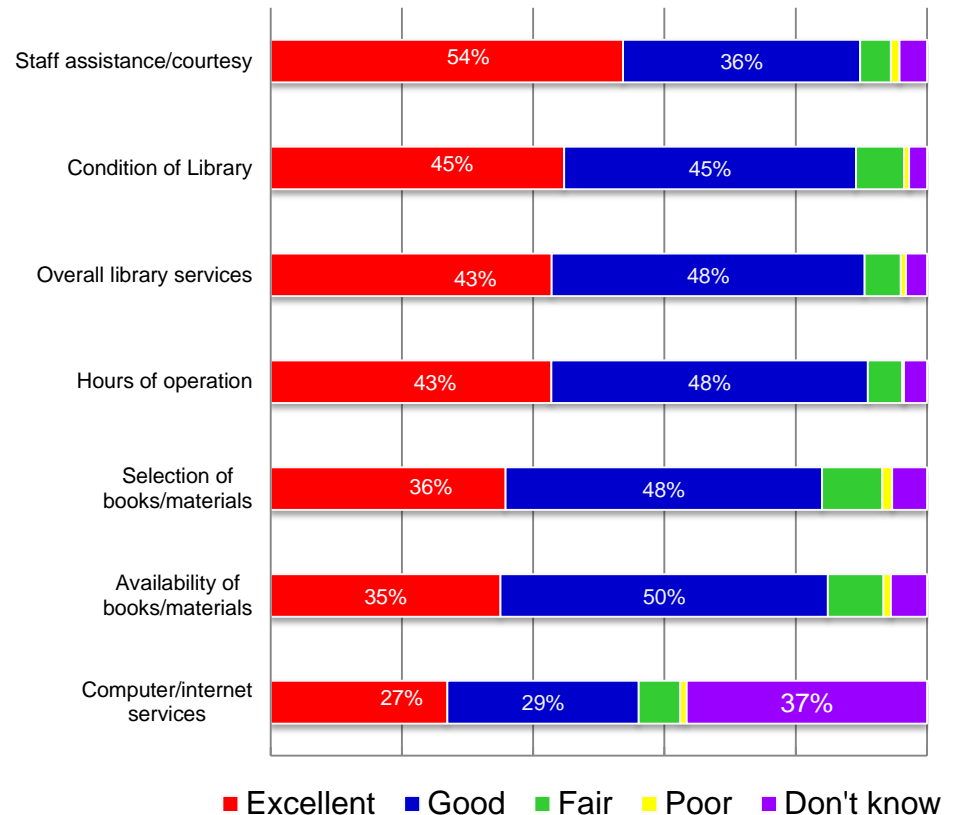
- Almost all respondents rated the events they attended as excellent or good.
- Ratings are presented for those who attended each event and exclude non-attenders.
- Percentage of respondents who did attend special events:

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2012</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Tree Lighting	56%	57%
<input type="checkbox"/> Independence Day	39%	39%
<input type="checkbox"/> Liberty Fest	28%	35%
<input type="checkbox"/> Halloween in the Park	20%	25%
<input type="checkbox"/> Veteran's Day	24%	23%
<input type="checkbox"/> Bloomin Bluegrass	26%	18%
<input type="checkbox"/> Celebration of Roses	17%	-
<input type="checkbox"/> Fishin' Fun`	15%	-
<input type="checkbox"/> Movie in the Park	12%	11%
<input type="checkbox"/> Date Night in the Park	9%	-



Library - 2014

- 59% (63% in 2012, 69% in 2010 and 73% in 2008) of all respondents polled have used the Manske Library or its services during the past 12 months.
- More than 90% of library users rated hours of operation, staff assistance/courtesy, condition of library, overall library services and hours of operation as excellent or good.
- 37% (37% in 2012, 46% in 2010) of library users could not rate computer/internet access, and therefore, probably do not use these services. Excluding those who do not use the library computers, 88% (86% in 2012, 96% in 2010) rated this service as excellent or good.
- Comments for the 2014 survey for fair/poor ratings were very similar to 2012 and 2010 comments:
 - Availability/selection – not enough current books, increase collection and variety of books, more movies (DVD's) and e-books.
 - Too noisy, too many unattended children running around
 - Computers – need more up-to-date computers and internet access
 - Staff – improve courtesy to customers, more knowledgeable staff
 - Hours – longer hours (open earlier, open later in evenings, need longer weekend hours)
 - Condition of library – outdated, needs updating

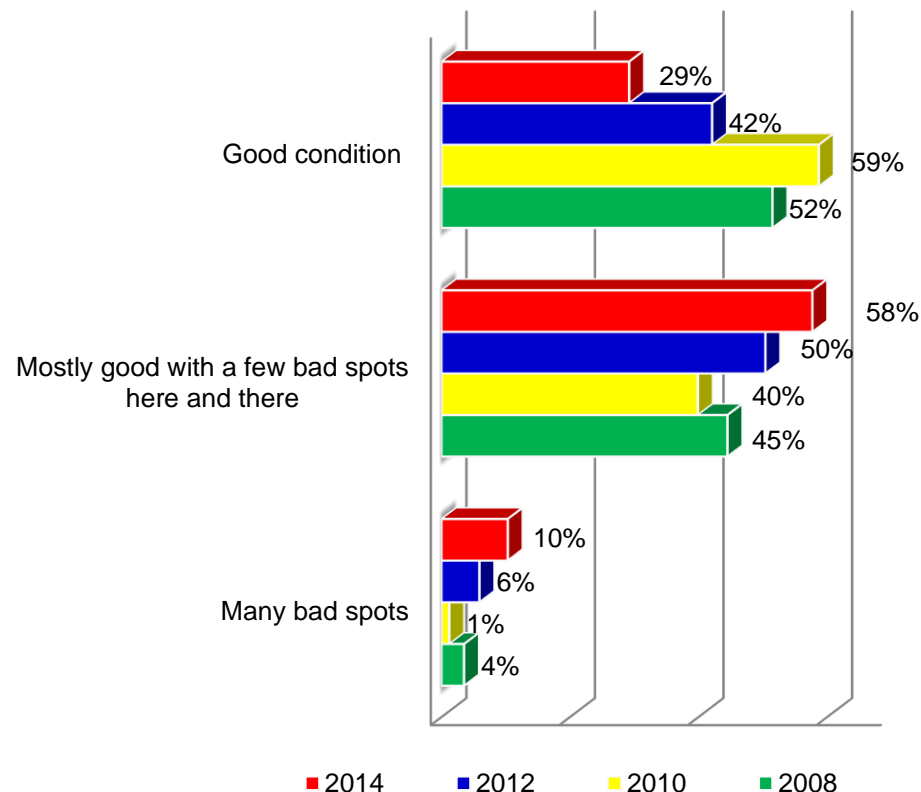


Library - 2014

- **What library services, programs or materials are the most valuable to you? (Most frequent mentions)**
 - Internet/online access/computers
 - Children's books, activities and programs. Need children's area/study room.
 - CD's/DVD's
 - Books (wide range; best sellers, newest, research materials, how-to-books, fiction, non-fiction, reference/resources. E-books, audio books)
 - Staff assistance and courtesy
- **What would you like to see changed or improved about library services, programs, materials, or the facility? (Most frequent mentions)**
 - Update library (interior and exterior)
 - Renovate restrooms
 - Improve staff knowledge and courtesy
 - Improve internet/online access
 - Add more computers
 - Enforce code of conduct (too many unattended noisy children)
 - Longer hours including weekends
 - Wider variety of DVD rentals
 - Larger selection of books (more variety, up-to-date, expand collection, reference/research books)
 - More audio books with audio download capability
 - More information on the website about programs and activities
 - Online check-out process if not user friendly
 - Revert back to a City operated library

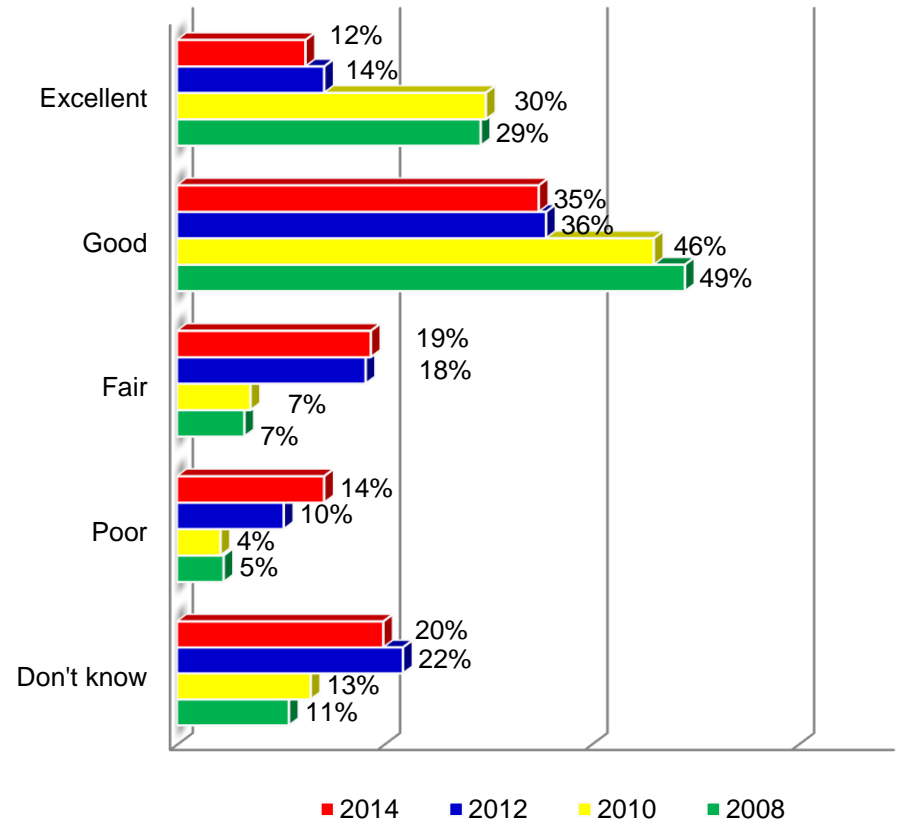
Condition of Streets/Roads in your Neighborhood - 2014

- 29% of all respondents said the streets in their neighborhood are in good condition, a decrease over the 2012, 2010 and 2008 results.
- 58% said they are mostly good but there are a few bad spots.
- 10% said there were many bad spots, an increase over previous years.
- *These statistics indicate the City should consider neighborhood street maintenance to be a priority.*



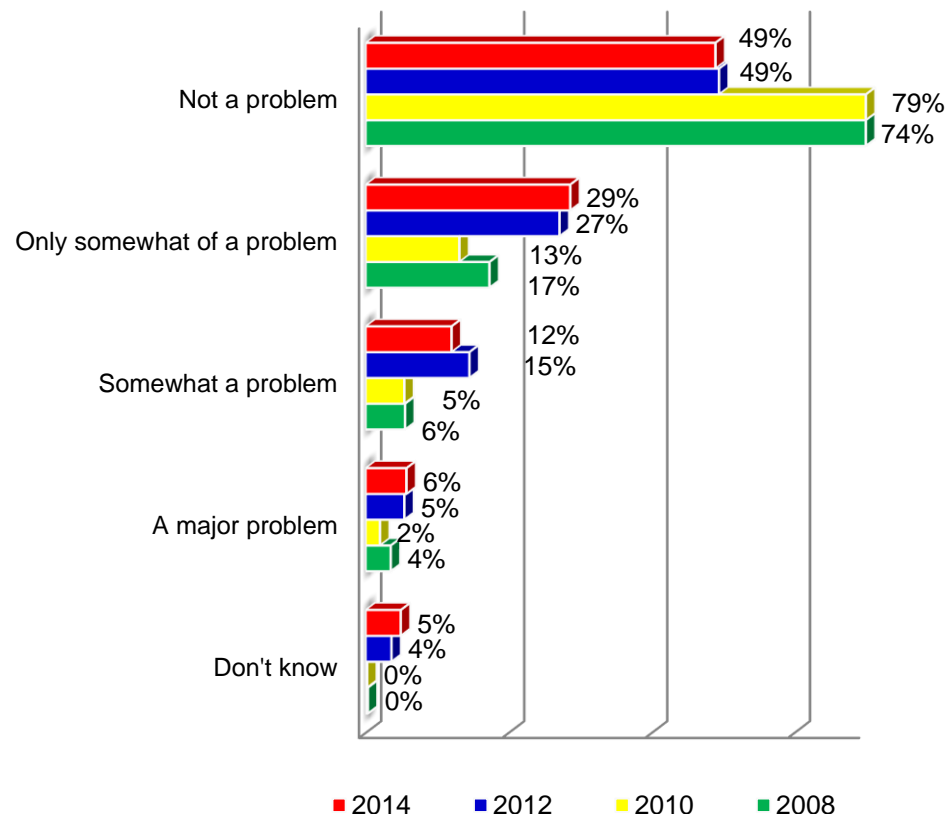
Quality of Street Sweeping Services in Your Neighborhood- 2014

- 47% of residents polled reported the quality of street sweeping services in their neighborhood is excellent or good a decline from previous years.
- One in five do not know about street sweeping services in their neighborhood.



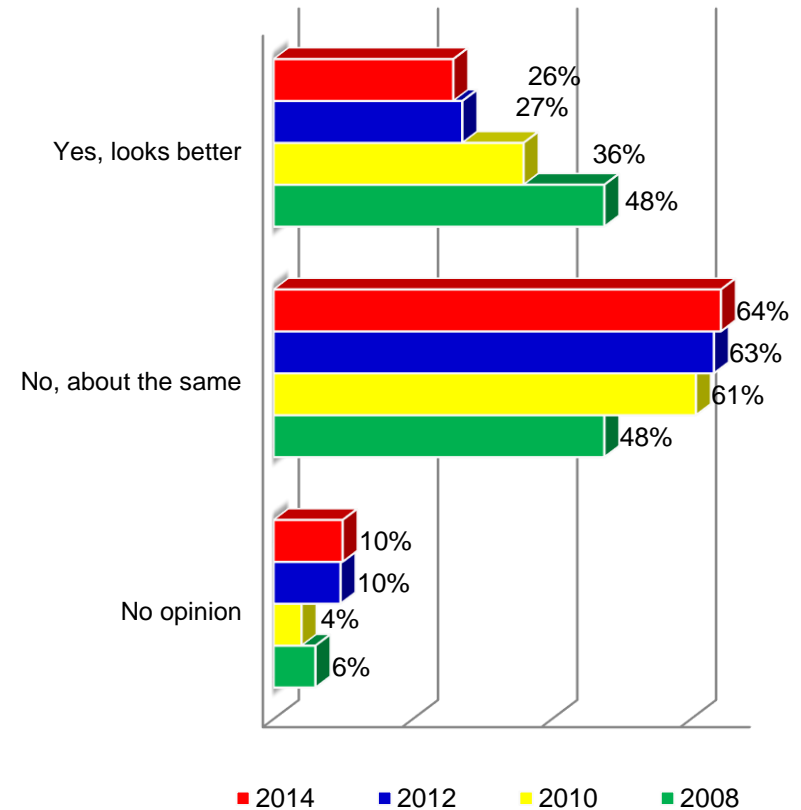
Code Enforcement - 2014

- Half of respondents in 2014 and 2012, down from 79% in 2010, said that tall weeds/grass, abandoned vehicles, graffiti and dilapidated buildings were not a problem in their neighborhood.
- 29% reported they are only a small problem, a 2% increase over 2012 results.
- These statistics indicate enhanced Code Enforcement services may be needed.
- Those who indicated it is a major problem cited these issues:
 - Codes are not enforced quickly or uniformly
 - Improve code enforcement for rental homes and abandoned homes
 - Deterioration of neighborhood yard and alley maintenance
 - Dilapidated fences, carports, garages, non-functioning cars
 - Tall weeds/grass/trash in alleys
 - Too many vehicles parked on streets and in yards with expired registration/inspection
- *More proactive, consistent code enforcement is needed*



Neighborhood Condition - 2014

- 26% of respondents said their neighborhood looks better than it did a year ago compared to 27% in 2012.
- 64% said it looks the same.



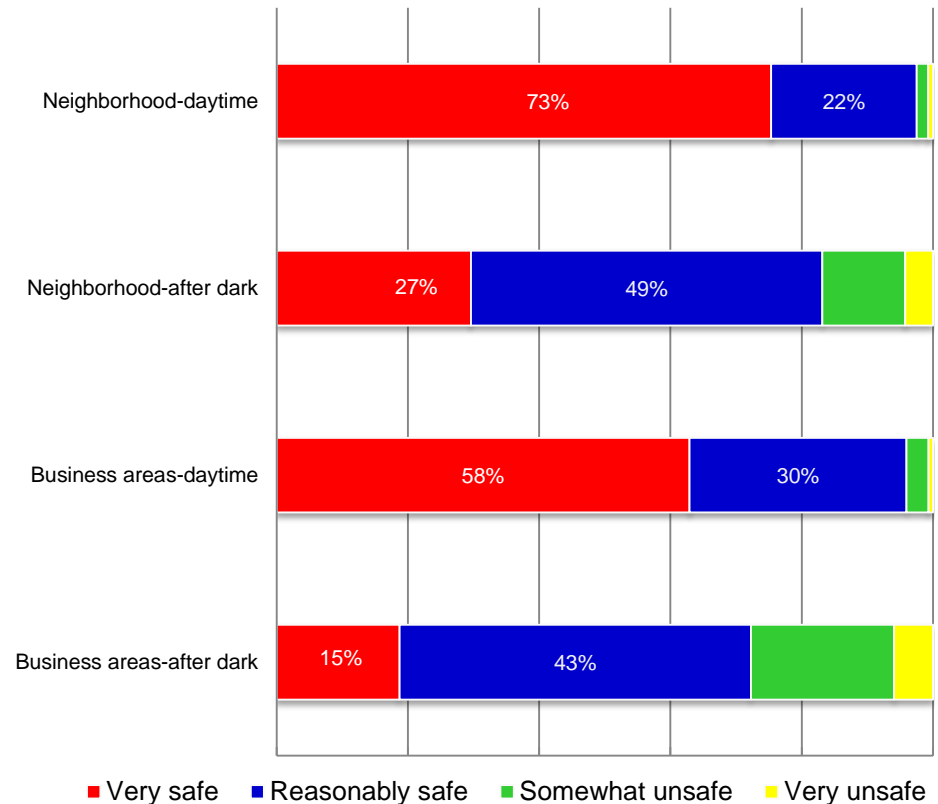


KEY FINDINGS

Public Safety

Neighborhood / Business Area Safety - 2014

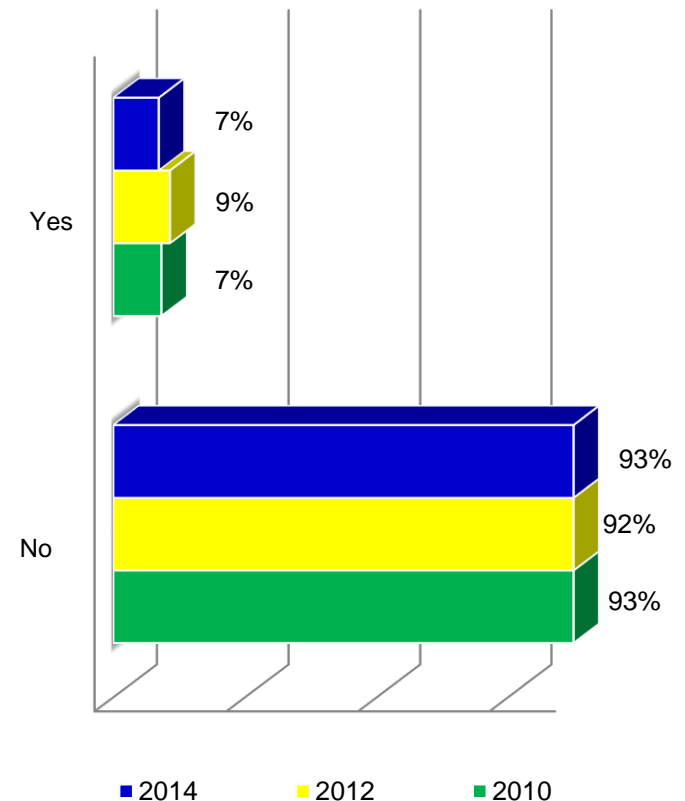
- 95% of residents feel very or reasonably safe in their neighborhoods during the day compared to 94% in 2012 and 96% in 2010.
- 88% feel very or reasonably safe in business areas during the daytime (87% in 2012 compared to 93% in 2010).
- 76% of residents feel very or reasonably safe in their neighborhoods after dark compared to 73% in 2012 and 2010.
- 58% feel very or reasonably safe in business areas after dark compared to 54% in 2012.



Victim of Any Crime - 2014

- According to the survey, very few respondents were the victim of any crime in the city.
- 78% of respondents in 2014 reported the crime(s) they were a victim of to police compared to 82% in 2012 and 73% in 2010.

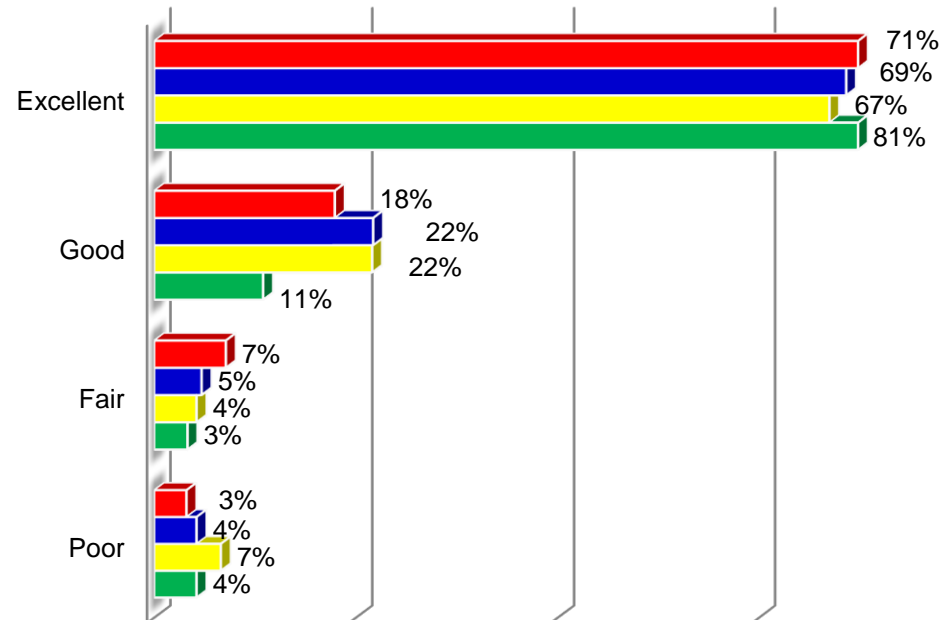
Q: Were you the victim of any crime within the past 12 months?



Contact with Farmers Branch Police -2014

- 41% of respondents in 2014 compared to 45% in 2012 had any contact with Farmers Branch police department during the past 12 months.
- A majority of respondents feel the handling of their contact by police was excellent or good. *These statistics indicates the Police Department is doing a good job at handling residents who have had contact with the department.*
- Among those who rated it fair or poor, comments included:
 - Improve customer service by staff
 - Officers are rude/not courteous
 - Lack of follow-up
 - More proactive patrol of neighborhoods

Base = 435 respondents had contact with Farmers Branch Police in 2014



- 2014 Rating-handling of contact by police
- 2012 Rating-handling of contact by police
- 2010 Rating-handling of contact by police
- 2008 Rating-handling of contact by police



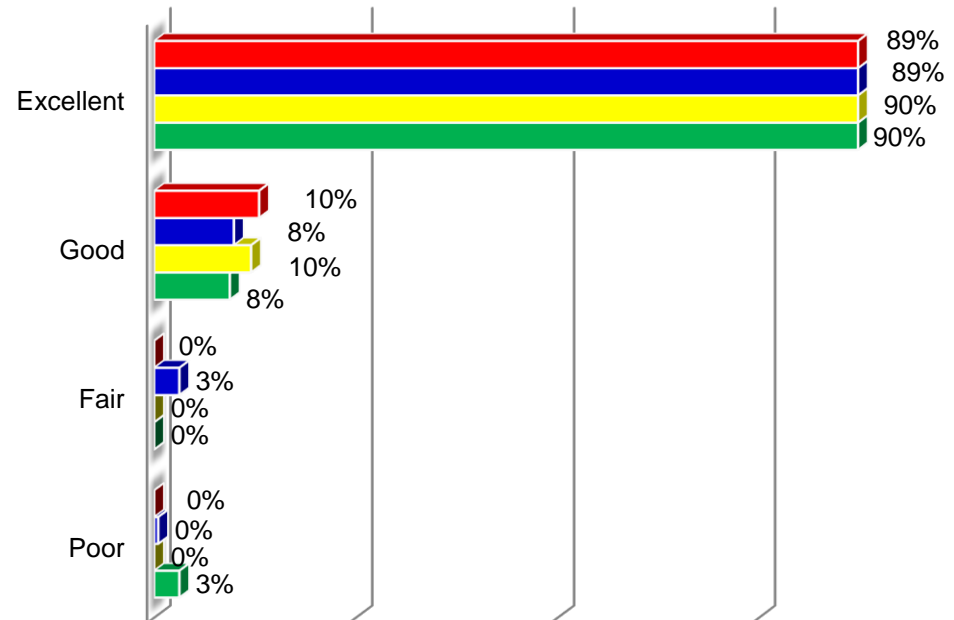
KEY FINDINGS

Fire/Medical Services

Fire Services - 2014

- 17% in 2014 (16% in 2012 and 10% in 2010 and 2008) have had any contact with Farmers Branch Fire Services during the past 12 months.
- 100% of respondents in 2014 who had contact with Fire Services rated the handling of their contact as excellent or good.
- *These statistics indicate the Fire Services Department is doing an excellent job with handling residents who have had contact with the department.*

Base = 182 respondents had contact with Farmers Branch Fire Services 2014

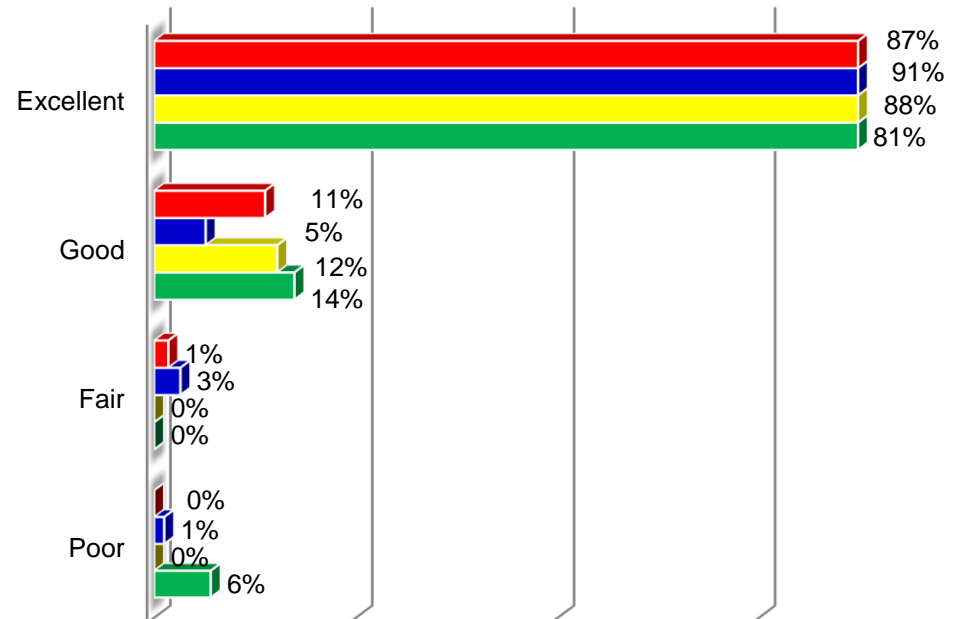


- 2014 Rating-handling of contact by fire services
- 2012 Rating-handling of contact by fire services
- 2010 Rating-handling of contact by fire services
- 2008 Rating-handling of contact by fire services

Emergency Medical Services/Ambulance - 2014

Base = 146 respondents had contact with Farmers Branch Emergency Medical Services/Ambulance - 2014

- 14% in 2014 (14% in 2012, 8% in 2010 and 9% in 2008) of respondents have had any contact with Farmers Branch Emergency Medical Services or Ambulance Services during the past 12 months.
- A majority of respondents who had contact with the Emergency Medical Services or Ambulance Services rated the handling of the contact as excellent or good.
- *These statistics indicates the Emergency Medical Services Department is doing an excellent job with handling residents who have had contact with the department.*



- 2014 Rating-handling of contact by EMS
- 2012 Rating-handling of contact by EMS
- 2010 Rating-handling of contact by EMS
- 2008 Rating-handling of contact by EMS

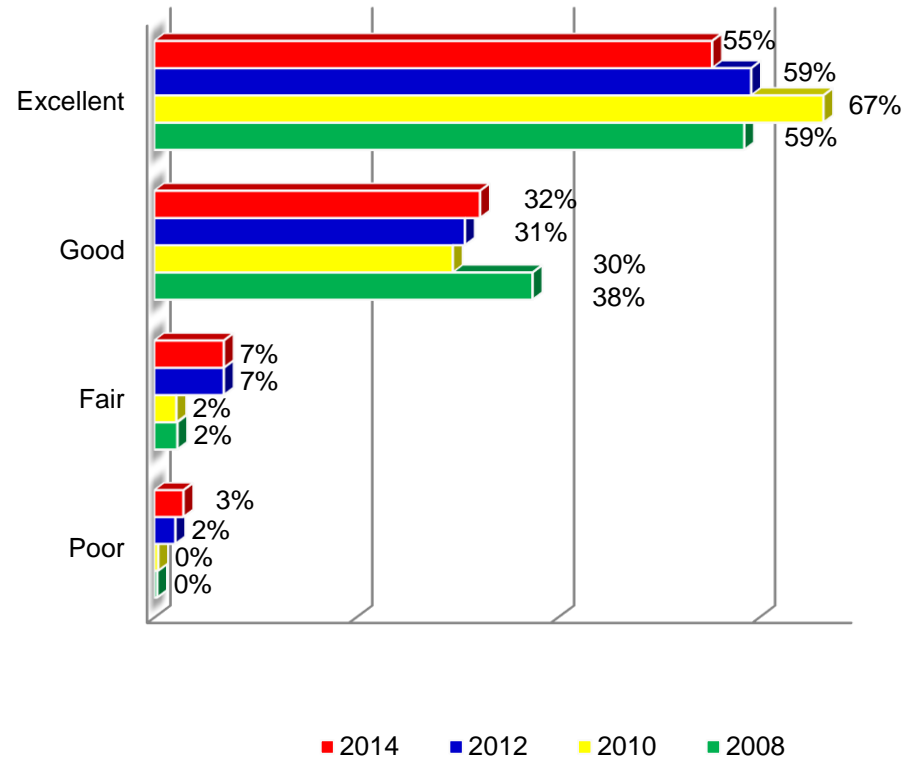


KEY FINDINGS

Trash and Recycling

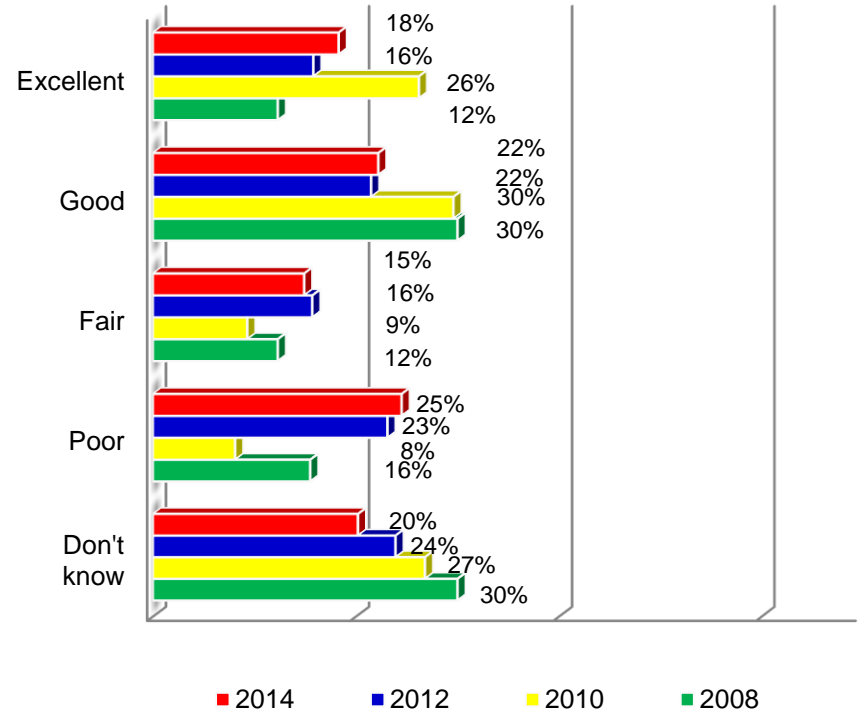
Residential Garbage Collection Services - 2014

- The City is doing a good job with residential garbage collection services since 87% (90% in 2012, 96% in 2010 and 97% in 2008) of respondents rated it as excellent or good.
- Only 10% of respondents rated it fair or poor, the primary comments included:
 - Inconsistent pick-up times
 - Prefer trash containers versus trash bags



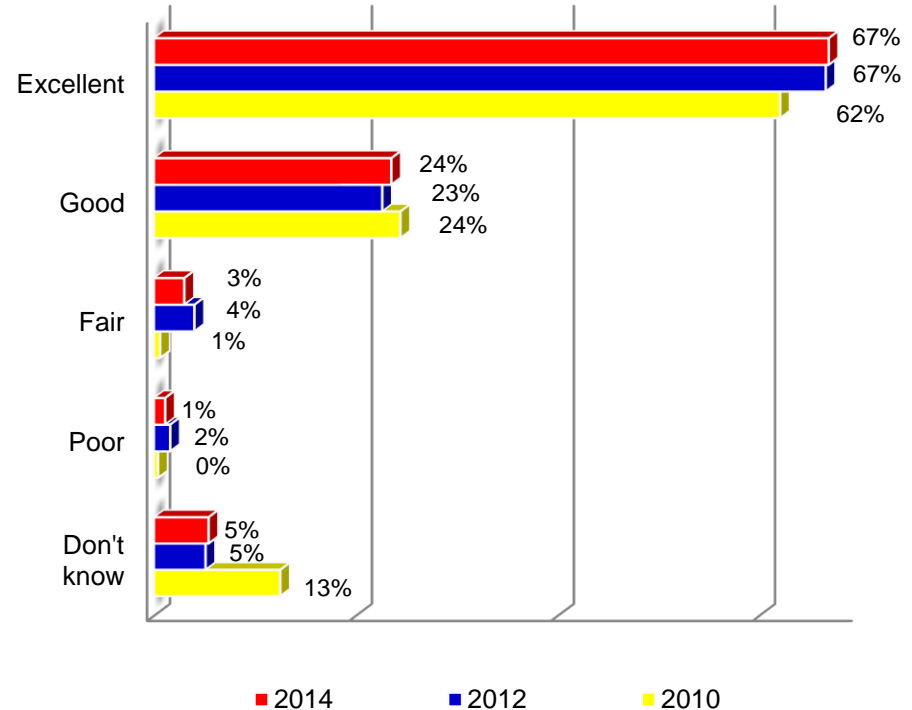
Residential Recycling Services - 2014

- 40% (37% in 2012, 56% in 2010 and 42% in 2008) of residents polled reported residential recycling services are excellent or good.
- 40% (39% in 2012, 17% in 2010, 28% in 2008) of respondents rated it fair or poor, comments included:
 - Need curbside recycling services
 - It is inconvenient to take recyclables to a drop off location, it prevents many residents from participating in recycling
 - Provide recycle and trash containers
 - Improve recycling education on what is recyclable and where the collection centers are located
 - The off-site recycle containers are often full
 - Would prefer once a week trash pick-up and once a week curbside recycle pick-up



Residential Green Grabber Pickup -2014

- 91% (90% in 2012 and 86% in 2010) of residents polled rated the green grabber pick up (bulky item pickup) services as excellent or good. (This question was not asked in the 2008 survey).
- Only 4% rated it fair or poor, primary comments included:
 - Green Grabber makes holes in my grass
 - Green Grabber does not always pick-up on scheduled day



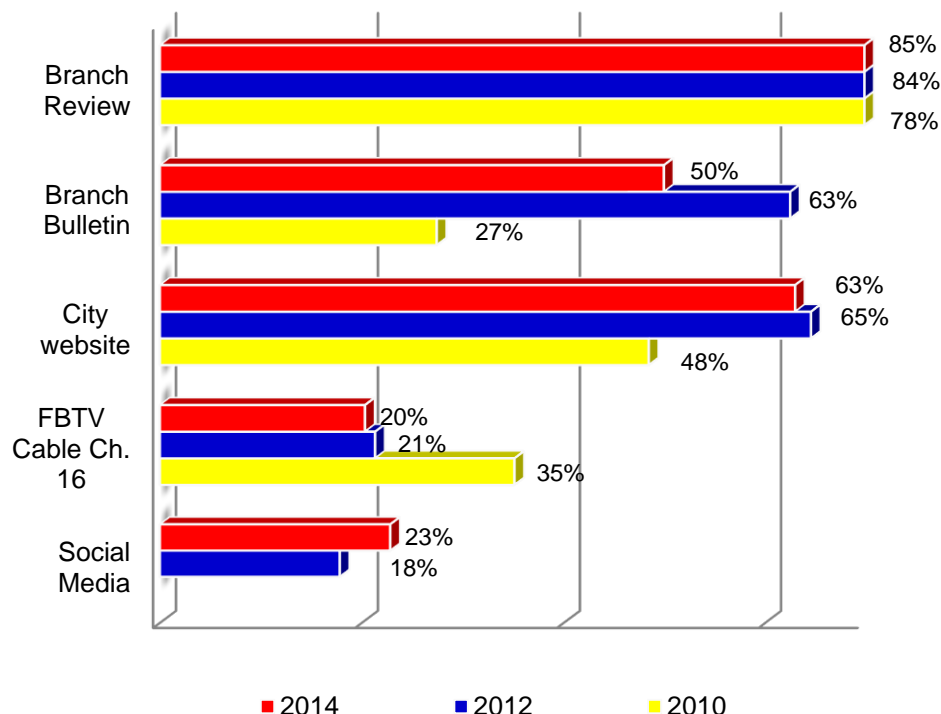


KEY FINDINGS

City Communication Efforts

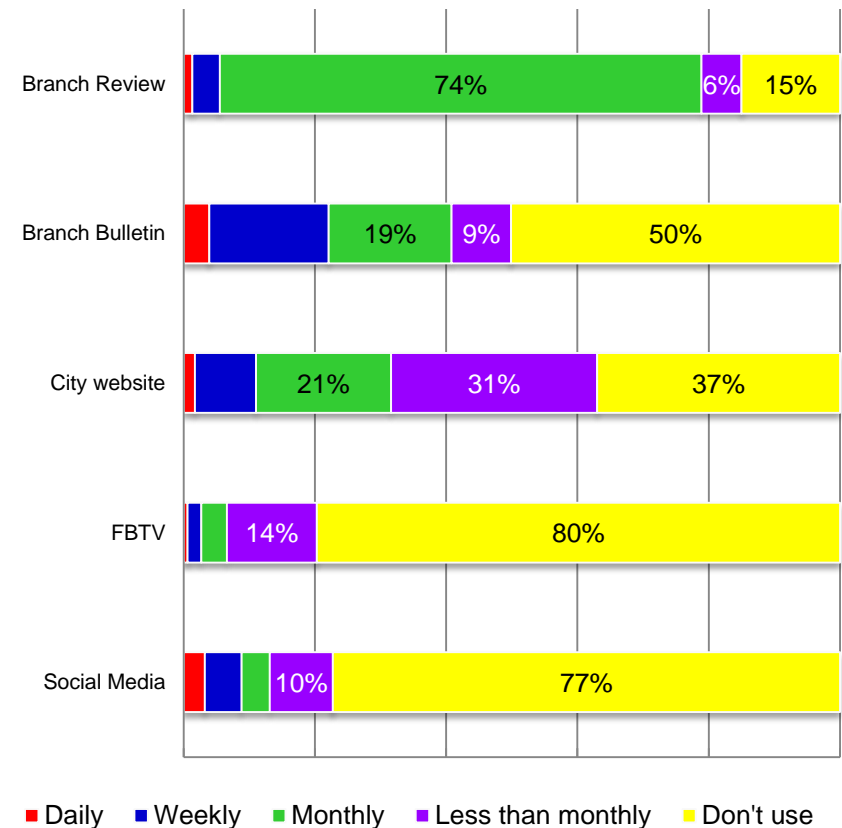
Media Used to Obtain City Information - 2014

- Respondents utilize various media to obtain information about the City.
- 85% of respondents read Branch Review, the City's water bill insert. (84% in 2012, 78% in 2010)
- 63% visit the City's website (65% in 2012, 48% in 2010).
- A decrease was shown in utilizing the Branch Bulletin, the city's email communication system or e-newsletter 50% compared to 63% in 2012.
- Use of social media increased 5% from 2012.



Frequency of Using Media Sources - 2014

- Among media sources used to obtain information about the City, Branch Review is utilized most, with 74% (78% in 2012, 73% in 2010) using this source monthly or more.
- Branch Bulletin (e-newsletter) is used second most with 41% sing this source at least monthly (54% in 2012, 28% in 2010).
- The City website is used third most with 32% accessing it monthly or more (35% in 2012, 33% in 2010).
- Only 9% of respondents reported they have been unable to find information they needed.
- Top responses regarding information they were unable to find:
 - ☐ No online water bill payment system
 - ☐ City staff contact phone numbers
 - ☐ Code enforcement and city ordinances
 - ☐ Trash/recycling information
 - ☐ Crime listings/reports



Benchmark Data

Benchmark Data

- Survey data presented on the following charts is from various municipal surveys conducted during 2012 and 2013.
- Percentages presented in the charts are for “excellent” and “good” ratings.
- Cities included in those with populations of 50,000 residents or less:
 - Southlake, Texas
 - Colleyville, Texas
 - Burleson, Texas
 - San Marcus, Texas
 - Pflugerville, Texas
- Comparisons are presented for Texas and the U.S. where available.
- In a few cases not all cities listed above are included in the benchmark averages because some questions were not included in each municipal survey.

Benchmark Data – City Services

Percentages are for “excellent” or “good” ratings for each characteristic.

City Characteristic	Farmers Branch 2014*	Average of TX Cities with less than 50,000	Texas Average 2013	U.S. Average 2013
Public Safety	96%	86%	78%	80%
Garbage/Recycling	85	84	77	77
Maintenance/appearance of parks	94	84	75	78
Library	88	84	75	77
Street Maintenance	70	66	58	59
Animal Control	79	70	59	59
Senior Services	90	66	NA	NA
Code Enforcement	65	64	51	50
Overall quality of city services**	83	74	66	67

*Data is extracted from Q2, how would you rate the quality of these city services? Ratings are for excellent/good responses. Refer to page 7 and 8.

**Overall quality of city services for Farmers Branch is a weighted average of all excellent/good ratings shown in the above chart.

Benchmark Data – Quality of Life

Percentages are for “excellent” or “good” ratings for each characteristic.

City Quality of Life Characteristics	Farmers Branch 2014*	Average of TX Cities with less than 50,000	Texas Average 2013	U.S. Average 2013
You City as a place to raise a family	87	90	77	80
Your City as a place to work	84	73	59	58
Your City as a place to retire	86	77	70	67
Quality of services for taxes paid	86	61	47	45
Overall quality of life in City	94	85	77	80

•Data is extracted from Q18, how would you rate Farmers Branch on each of the following? Ratings are for excellent/good responses. Refer to page 13



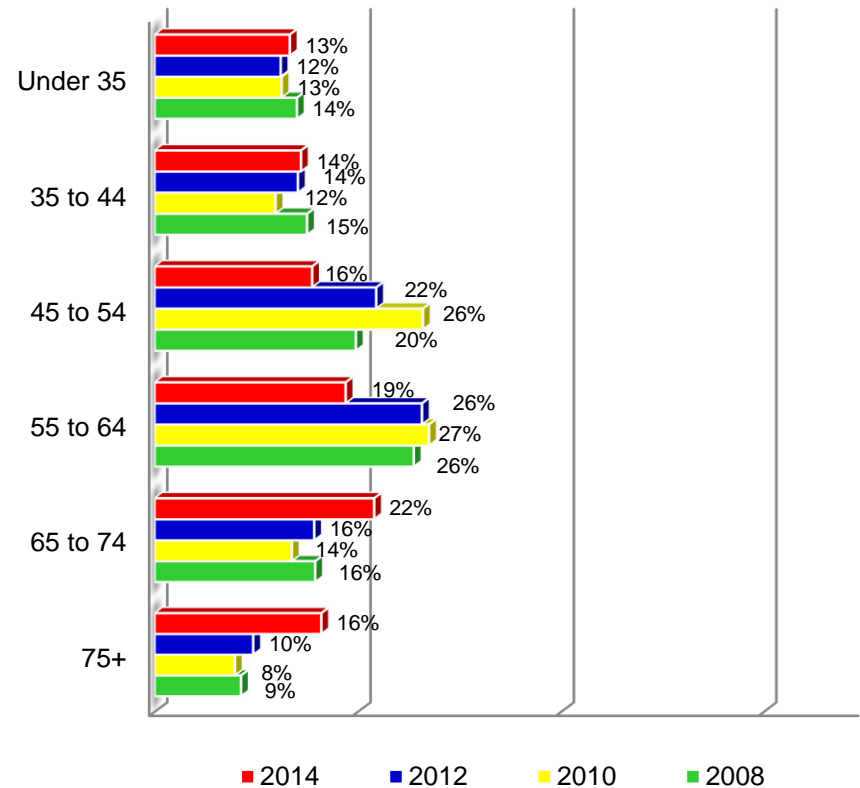
KEY FINDINGS

Demographics of Surveyed Respondents

Respondent Demographics

- 89% own their home and 11% rent.
- 45% were male and 55% female.
- 72% (74% in 2012, 72% in 2010) have no children 19 or younger residing within their household.
- The age of surveyed respondents is representative of the U.S. Census data for Farmers Branch.
 - Mean Age:
 - Online survey 52
 - Mailed survey 59

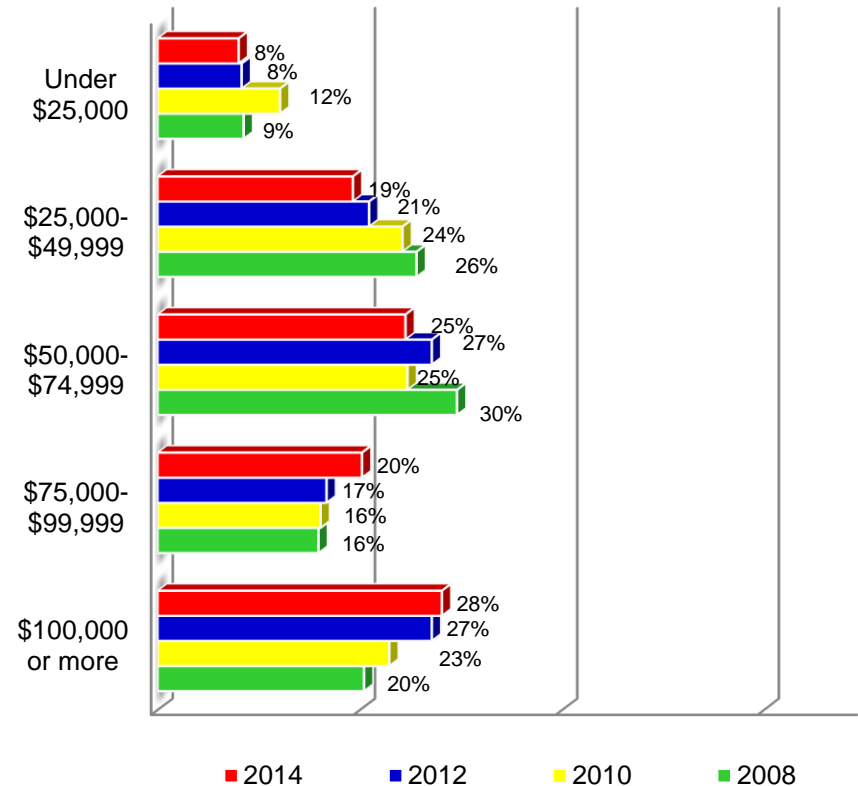
Age Category	City of Farmers Branch	
	2014 Survey	Census 2010
Under 35	13.3%	19.4%
35 to 44	14.4	19.0
45 to 54	15.5	21.3
55 to 64	18.8	16.4
65+	38.0	23.9



Respondent Demographics

- Mean annual household income in 2014 is \$78,260 compared to \$76,000 in 2012 and \$75,650 in 2010.
- 93%% live in a single family home (87% in 2012 and 81% in 2010) and the remaining respondents live in live in an apartment, town home, or duplex.
- Ethnicity of respondents interviewed:

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2010</u>
□ Caucasian	75.0%	73.0%	76.2%
□ African Am.	3.8	5.4	2.4
□ Hispanic	18.9	18.7	18.8
□ Asian	1.5	2.4	1.2
□ Other	0.9	0.5	1.0



Conclusions

Conclusions

- Farmers Branch as a city and community is highly valued by its residents with 94% rating the overall quality of life in the City as excellent or good. 86% rated the overall value of services for the tax dollars they pay as excellent or good.
- The top priorities the city should continue emphasis whereby citizens rated these with high importance and rated the current quality of services high:
 - ☐ Public safety
 - ☐ Maintaining appearance of parks, landscapes and facilitiesTwo services that received high importance and slightly lower quality ratings the city should focus a slightly higher emphasis on:
 - ☐ Residential trash services
 - ☐ Animal control services
- Opportunities for improvement, citizens rated these with high importance and lower on quality:
 - ☐ Revitalizing residential and retail areas
 - ☐ Code enforcement services
 - ☐ Maintaining streets and roads
 - ☐ Providing pathways (sidewalks, trails and bike paths)
- Less emphasis can be placed on these services since respondents rated these services as less important and feel the city is providing them at a high quality level:
 - ☐ Providing a variety of recreation programs
 - ☐ Senior services
 - ☐ Special events
 - ☐ Library Services

National Service Research

(Background/Contact Information)

Contact: Andrea Thomas, Owner

2601 Ridgmar Plaza, Suite 2

Fort Worth, Texas 76116

817-312-3606

817-326-6109-fax

e-mail: andrea@nationalserviceresearch.com

web site: www.nationalserviceresearch.com

National Service Research (NSR), founded in 1989, is a full-service market research consulting firm and conducts market studies for the public and private sector. NSR conducts various types of consumer and business research including focus groups and surveys nationwide. NSR's owner and founder, Andrea Thomas, over thirty-five years of professional market research experience.